

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) A set top box (STB) for decoding media audio/video streams from multiple sources, the STB comprising:
 - a processor;
 - a hardware decoder, coupled to the processor, for decoding media audio/video streams;
 - a first stream receiver configured to receive a first audio/video media stream from a first source;
 - a second stream receiver configured to receive a second audio/video media stream from a second source, the second audio/video stream comprising Internet Protocol (IP) encapsulated audio/video data, and the second source comprising an IP source; and
 - a stream selector having first and second inputs and an output, the first input coupled to the first stream receiver, the second input coupled to the second stream receiver, and the output coupled to the hardware decoder, wherein the stream selector is configured to selectively direct one of the media-streams first audio/video stream and the second audio/video stream to the hardware decoder under control of the processor, and wherein the hardware decoder is configured to decode the selected output from the stream selector.
2. (currently amended) The STB of claim 1, wherein at least one media the audio/video stream comprises a Moving Picture Experts Group (MPEG) stream, and wherein the hardware decoder comprises an MPEG decoder.

3. (original) The STB of claim 1, wherein the first stream receiver comprises a video tuner.

4. (original) The STB of claim 3, wherein the first source comprises a cable television source.

5. (original) The STB of claim 1, wherein the second stream receiver comprises a modem device.

6. (original) The STB of claim 5, wherein the modem device comprises a Data Over Cable Service Interface Specification (DOCSIS) modem.

7. (canceled)

8. (original) The STB of claim 1, wherein the stream selector comprises a multiplexer having a select line coupled to the processor.

9. (original) The STB of claim 1, further comprising:
an audio/video controller coupled to the hardware decoder for formatting media streams for presentation by an external display device; and
an output coupled to the hardware decoder for providing operable connection to the external display device.

10. (currently amended) The STB of claim 1, further comprising a storage device, coupled to the processor, for storing at least one media of the first audio/video stream and the second audio/video stream.

11. (currently amended) A method in a set top box (STB) for decoding media audio/video streams from multiple sources, the STB comprising a hardware decoder and a processor, the method comprising:

receiving a first media audio/video stream from a first television source;

receiving a second media audio/video stream from a second an Internet Protocol (IP) source;

using a stream selector, under control of the processor, to selectively direct one of the media streams first audio/video stream and the second audio/video stream to the hardware decoder for decoding, the hardware decoder capable of decoding the first audio/video stream and the second audio/video stream.

12. (currently amended) The method of claim 11, wherein at least one media the first audio/video stream comprises a Moving Picture Experts Group (MPEG) stream, and wherein the hardware decoder comprises an MPEG decoder.

13. (currently amended) The method of claim 11, wherein the first media audio/video stream is received by a video tuner within the STB.

14. (currently amended) The method of claim 13, wherein the first television source comprises a cable television source.

15. (currently amended) The method of claim 11, wherein the second media audio/video stream is received by a modem device within the STB.

16. (original) The method of claim 15, wherein the modem device comprises a Data Over Cable Service Interface Specification (DOCSIS) modem.

17. (canceled)

18. (original) The method of claim 11, wherein the stream selector comprises a multiplexer having a select line coupled to the processor.

19. (currently amended) The method of claim 11, further comprising formatting the selected media audio/video stream for presentation by an external display device.

20. (currently amended) The method of claim 11, further comprising storing at least one media of the first audio/video stream and the second audio/video stream in a storage device within the STB.

21. (withdrawn) A companion device for enhancing a set top box for an entertainment system, the companion device comprising:
- a processor;
- a hardware decoder, coupled to the processor, for decoding media streams;
- a first stream receiver, coupled to the set top box, for receiving a media stream therefrom;
- a second stream receiver for receiving a media stream from an alternative source; and
- a stream selector having first and second inputs and an output, the first input coupled to the first stream receiver, the second input coupled to the second stream receiver, and the output coupled to the hardware decoder, wherein the stream selector is configured to selectively direct one of the media streams to the hardware decoder under control of the processor.
22. (withdrawn) The companion device of claim 21, wherein at least one media stream comprises a Moving Picture Experts Group (MPEG) stream, and wherein the hardware decoder comprises an MPEG decoder.
23. (withdrawn) The companion device of claim 21, wherein the first stream receiver comprises a video tuner.
24. (withdrawn) The companion device of claim 21, wherein the second stream receiver comprises a modem device.

25. (withdrawn) The companion device of claim 24, wherein the modem device comprises a Data Over Cable Service Interface Specification (DOCSIS) modem.
26. (withdrawn) The companion device of claim 24, wherein the second source comprises an Internet Protocol (IP) source.
27. (withdrawn) The companion device of claim 21, wherein the stream selector comprises a multiplexer having a select line coupled to the processor.
28. (withdrawn) The companion device of claim 21, further comprising:
an audio/video controller coupled to the hardware decoder for formatting media streams for presentation by an external display device; and
an output coupled to the hardware decoder for providing operable connection to the external display device.
29. (withdrawn) The companion device of claim 21, further comprising a storage device, coupled to the processor, for storing at least one media stream.

30. (currently amended) A set top box (STB) for decoding media audio/video streams from multiple sources, the STB comprising:

processing means;

decoding means, coupled to the processing means, for decoding media audio/video streams;

first means for receiving a media first audio/video stream from a first source;

second means for receiving a media second audio/video stream from a second source; and

stream selection means having first and second inputs and an output, the first input coupled to the first means for receiving [[a]]the first audio/video media stream from the first source, the second input coupled to the second means for receiving [[a]]the second audio/video media stream from [[a]]the second source, and the output coupled to the decoding means, wherein the stream selection means are configured to selectively direct one of the media streams first audio/video stream and the second audio/video stream to the decoding means under control of the processing means, and wherein the decoding means is configured to decode the selected output from the stream selection means.

31. (currently amended) A multimedia communications apparatus comprising:

a receiver for receiving a multiplexed video signal and a streaming media video signal from a multimedia communications network;

a first processing path coupled to the receiving device for tuning to, demodulating, and demultiplexing the multiplexed video signal;

a second processing path coupled to the receiving device for demodulating the streaming media video signal;

a selector for selecting between an output of the first processing path and an output of the second processing path; and

a decoder for decoding the selected output from the selector.

32. (original) The multimedia communications apparatus of claim 31, wherein the receiver comprises a radio-frequency input coupled to a splitter, and the splitter comprises a first output coupled to the first processing path and a second output coupled to the second processing path.

33. (original) The multimedia communications apparatus of claim 31, wherein the first processing path comprises a video tuner coupled to the first output of the splitter, and wherein the second processing path comprises a modem device coupled to the second output of the splitter.

34. (original) The multimedia communications apparatus of claim 31, wherein the decoder comprises a hardware-based decoder.

35. (currently amended) The multimedia communications apparatus of claim 31, wherein the multiplexed video signal and the streaming media signals video signal are both encoded using a same technique, and wherein the decoder includes capability to decode signals encoded using the same technique.

36. (original) The multimedia communications apparatus of claim 35, wherein the same technique comprises an MPEG encoding technique.

37. (original) The multimedia communications apparatus of claim 35, wherein the same technique comprises a Digicypher encoding technique.

38. (original) The multimedia communications apparatus of claim 31, wherein the receiver is integrated with a set top box.

39. (original) The multimedia communications apparatus of claim 31, wherein the receiver is integrated with a television set.

40. (withdrawn) A multimedia communications apparatus comprising:
a receiver for receiving a video signal and a streaming media signal from a multimedia communications network;

a first processing path coupled to the receiving device for tuning to the video signal;

a second processing path coupled to the receiving device for demodulating the streaming media signal;

a first decoder for decoding output from the first processing path; and

a second decoder for decoding output from the second processing path.

41. (withdrawn) The multimedia communications apparatus of claim 40,
wherein the first and second decoders comprise hardware-based decoders.

Summary Of Interview

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the telephone interview extended to Applicant's counsel Kory D. Christensen and Aaron D. Barker on October 26, 2006.

Exhibits and/or Demonstrations

None.

Identification of Claims Discussed

Claim 1.

Identification of Prior Art Discussed

U.S. Patent No. 6,434,171 issued August 13, 2002 to Ishida.

Proposed Amendments

The Examiner and Applicant's counsel discussed proposed amendments as indicated in claim 1 in the listing of claims.

Principal Arguments and Other Matters

During the interview, Applicant's counsel clarified patentably distinguishing features of the invention, including differences between FIG. 3 of the present application and FIG. 5 of Ishida. As discussed in the remarks section of this Amendment, such differences include Ishida's lack of two audio/video streams processed through respective paths and selectively provided to a decoder.

Results of Interview

Applicant's counsel agreed to amend the claims as suggested by the Examiner during the interview to clarify the distinctions between the claims and Ishida. Therefore, the Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the pending amended claims.